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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the current status of programs in universities in the United States that offer doctoral degrees in education administration/leadership and to identify recent trends in educational leadership programming. The 127 institutions (of 194 invited to participate) responded to a survey and provided data on admissions criteria, orientation activities, instructional delivery patterns, and program exit criteria. A summary profile describing the typical doctoral degree program in educational administration/leadership was developed using this baseline data. The average doctoral program admits 18 student annually and requires an admission profile that includes the following: a minimum score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative subtests of the Graduate Record Examination, an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00, a graduate GPA of approximately 3.23, a writing sample that includes an essay with a personal statement of goals, and a personal interview. Though doctoral programs bear a strong resemblance to each other and generally follow traditional lines, the study found evidence of new practices such as portfolios, mentors, internships, field-based programs, and technology, as well as a trend in program restructuring and redesign. The comprehensive examination and dissertation continue to be the primary requirements for exiting the doctoral program. Twenty institutions reported that they had recently completed or were planning program redesigns. (Contains 17 references.) (JB)

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Preparing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Results of a National Survey of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the current status of programs in universities in the United States that offer doctoral degrees in educational administration/leadership and to identify recent trends in educational leadership programming. The 127 institutions responding to the survey provided data on admissions criteria, orientation activities, instructional delivery patterns, and program exit criteria. A summary profile describing the typical doctoral degree program in educational administration/leadership was developed using this baseline data. Emerging practices such as the use of cohorts, portfolios, internships, technology, and mentors were also identified and discussed.

Preparing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Results of a National Survey of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs

The educational reform movement that began with A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) has also focused attention on the effectiveness of traditional preparation programs in educational administration. Reports by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA) in 1987 and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 1989 have disclosed inadequacies of traditional administrator preparation programs and have suggested numerous improvements. The development of the NPBEA's knowledge and skill base for the principalship (Thomson, 1993) represented a significant attempt by ten national educational organizations not only to bridge the gap between theory and practice but also to reach consensus on core skills required for the principalship. It is clear that "there is a growing feeling among influential leaders both within and outside of educational administration that training programs need to be improved--quickly and in fundamental ways--or be pushed off the stage altogether" (Murphy, 1992, p. 3).

In a continuing effort to improve administrator preparation programs, the educational administration restructuring movement is gaining momentum at many universities. The Danforth Foundation Program for the Preparation of School Principals has been a key player in this movement, supporting the efforts of educational administration faculties at 22 universities as they reconceptualize their roles in the preparation of principals (Milstein, 1993). Basic components universities considered in their restructuring activities included application screening/assessment policies, diversity of candidate selections, curriculum review, internship experiences, and mentors. While these initiatives have been directed primarily at the master's level, they are also providing the impetus for doctoral program restructuring at the institutions.

In addition to demands for improving the quality of educational leadership programs, the previous decade also realized an increase in the number of institutions offering doctoral degrees. Seventeen new Ed.D. programs in educational administration/ leadership were initiated during the 1980s, primarily at regional universities offering their first doctoral program (McLaughlin & Moore, 1990). In spite of the need to revise the structure of the doctoral programs, the curriculum content and instructional delivery methods of these new programs were similar to most other university graduate school models and the procedures for recruitment and selection of students remained basically unchanged. Although free from the encumbrance of already-established programs and developed during the time period when traditional models were being questioned, the newly created doctoral programs differ only marginally from older programs.

Relatively few nationwide studies of doctoral programs have been conducted, and those studies reported within the past eight years have been limited in scope and have not revealed unexpected findings. For example, while the selection of the most capable doctoral candidates is of critical importance, a recent survey of 84 chairpersons of educational administration departments accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) determined that 48% were not satisfied with the effectiveness of their admissions criteria for predicting academic and career success (Fiedler, Foldesy, Matranga, & Peltier, 1993). In two studies, examinations of Ph.D. and Ed.D. student programs of study disclosed that coursework completed under these two degree programs were virtually identical (Norton & Levan, 1987; Norton, 1992). This finding questions the traditionally held notion that the Ph.D. degree demands a significantly greater research concentration than the Ed.D. Comparisons of programs of study of institutions that are members of University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) and nonUCEA institutions have revealed close similarities in doctoral coursework. The majority of these courses were completed in educational administration (39% in UCEA-member vs. 36% in nonUCEA member), followed by educational foundations courses

(26% vs. 16%) and research/statistics coursework (15% vs. 14%) (Norton & Levan, 1987; Norton, 1992).

The Study

In a continuous effort to ensure that their programs effectively meet the professional needs of practicing administrators, educational administration faculties are reviewing their doctoral programs and are sharing innovations with the educational administration community (Barnett, et al., 1992; Bratlien, Genzer, Hoyle, & Oates, 1992; Claudet, Hartmeister, O'Hair, Reavis, & Sparkman, 1994). Since faculties contemplating changes would benefit from information on shared practices in educational administration programs, this study was undertaken to determine the current status of programs in institutions in the United States that offer doctoral degrees in educational leadership/administration and to identify emerging trends in educational leadership programming.

Method

All universities in the United States that offer Doctor of Philosophy and/or Doctor of Education degrees in educational administration or educational leadership comprised the population for the study. Cross-referencing NCATE-accredited doctoral programs (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 1993-94) and those universities named in Educational Administration Directory (Lilley, 1993-94), The Official GRE/CGS Directory of Graduate Programs (1992-93), and Peterson's Guide to Graduate and Professional Programs (1993), yielded a total population of 194 universities.

This descriptive study was delimited to the following four areas: admissions criteria, orientation activities, methods of instructional delivery, and criteria for determining successful completion of program requirements. A 34-question survey was developed to obtain information on these four areas of focus. The survey was field tested, then mailed to department chairs or program chairs at the 194 identified institutions. Two follow-up mailings were also conducted. Five respondents indicated that their institutions currently do not offer a doctoral program and two stated that their programs were being eliminated.

A total of 127 usable surveys were returned, representing 67.9% of the remaining population of 187 institutions.

Results of the Study

An analysis of survey data revealed strong similarities between institutions with respect to admissions criteria, orientation activities, instructional delivery, and program exit criteria. Within each category, however, some significant differences were apparent as several institutions reported requirements that depart from more traditional practices as described in past literature on doctoral programs in educational administration and leadership. Data on the four areas are discussed in the sections that follow.

Admissions Criteria

It is not surprising that standardized test scores continued to be widely used as a major piece of the admissions criteria at nearly all institutions surveyed; 120 of 127 reported using these scores as part of their admissions requirement. The most frequently requested standardized tests were the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) at 58% of the institutions and the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) at 33%, and the remaining institutions accepted either test. Eighty-three percent of the programs requiring the GRE used the verbal and quantitative subtests and almost universally required a minimum score of 1000 (range 850-1100). Eleven universities also included the analytical subtest score; six of these required a minimum score of 1500 on the three subtests (range 1000-1500). Two programs accepted the higher score of the quantitative and analytical subtests. The programs accepting the MAT required a mean minimum score of 51 (range 40-69).

In addition to the use of standardized achievement tests as part of the admissions package, a minimum grade point average (GPA) requirement was also a widely used criterion. As shown in Table 1, 72 universities required minimum undergraduate GPAs, with a range of 2.0 to 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and a mean GPA of 2.87. However, over half (37 of 72) of the programs required a 3.00 minimum undergraduate GPA. Graduate GPA minimum requirements were used at 97 institutions, with a much narrower range of 3.0 to

3.75 and a mean GPA of 3.23. While there was less agreement on graduate GPAs, 39 of the 97 required a 3.00 minimum.

Table 1

Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) Required for Admission into Doctoral Programs in Educational Administration/Leadership

Undergraduate (N = 71)		Graduate (N = 97)	
GPA	Number of Institutions	GPA	Number of Institutions
2.00	1	3.00	39
2.50	7	3.20	6
2.60	1	3.25	15
2.70	7	3.30	7
2.75	13	3.33	1
2.80	2	3.50	28
3.00	37	3.75	1
3.20	1		
3.50	2		
Mean GPA = 2.87		Mean GPA = 3.23	

In addition to these traditional admissions criteria, all but four universities required additional evidence to complete the admissions profile. A formal writing sample utilizing a wide range of formats was required by 86% of all institutions responding to the survey. The most common writing sample formats used were a statement of goals (at 32 universities) and an in-person written essay (21 institutions). Personal interviews of applicants for admission were also conducted at 72% of all institutions responding. Slightly less than 13%, however, required the applicant to make a formal presentation, and 24% stated that applicants must submit a portfolio as part of the admissions process. Respondents at many institutions stated that letters of recommendation were also included in the admissions profile.

Interestingly, most doctoral programs (83%) in educational administration/

leadership reported admitting students whose work experience fell outside the K-12 arena. The most frequently cited non-K-12 fields were higher education (70 universities) and health education/nursing (17). In addition, some 15 other vocational backgrounds were listed to describe the work experiences of students admitted. This more generic approach to educational leadership may explain why 48% of the universities did not require teaching experience for admission; of the programs with a teaching requirement, only four required more than three years experience. Some respondents noted that teaching experience was preferred but not required for admission to their programs, but it was mandatory for state administrative certification. Administrative experience was not an admissions prerequisite at 73% of the institutions; of the programs with an administrative requirement, only one required more than three years experience (see Table 2).

Table 2

Minimum Professional Experience Required for Admission into Doctoral Programs in Educational Administration/Leadership

Teaching Experience (N = 117)		Administrative Experience (N = 109)	
Years	Number of Institutions	Years	Number of Institutions
0	56	0	80
1.0	25	1.0	6
1.5	2	1.5	2
2.0	7	2.0	5
2.5	0	2.5	1
3.0	23	3.0	14
4.0	1	4.0	1
5.0	3	5.0	0
Mean Years =	0.49	Mean Years =	1.37

Enrollment management and recruiting have become serious concerns at many university graduate programs in educational administration/leadership. One aspect of that concern is the recruiting of minority applicants. Less than 30% of survey respondents indicated that they employed special admissions criteria for underrepresented groups. Students with below-minimum standardized test scores and/or GPAs were commonly considered for admission on a case-by-case basis at these institutions. Eight respondents did note that they utilized a point system under a holistic approach to admissions; this approach affords flexibility for students who may not meet GPA or standardized test score minimums.

Orientation Activities

The literature is relatively silent on how students enter into their doctoral coursework after being admitted. Some universities have addressed this issue of induction through orientation activities. Sixty-two percent of the institutions reported that they provide a planned orientation experience for newly entering doctoral students; 49% of these institutions deliver the orientation during the summer. Two additional components are also emerging in the initial phase of the doctoral program of study in some institutions. Respondents for nearly one-half (46%) of all doctoral programs in this sample reported that students began their classes as a cohort. In addition, at 33% of the institutions team building activities are used to strengthen the doctoral cohort experience.

Instructional Delivery

Doctoral programs in educational administration and leadership continue to be distributed between both Ph.D. and Ed.D. camps. Study results indicated that 61 institutions offer only the Ed.D. degree, 23 institutions offer only the Ph.D. degree, and 43 offer both degrees.

It is not surprising that evening classes (117 institutions) and summer classes (104 institutions) are the predominant delivery structure for doctoral coursework in educational administration and leadership, since doctoral students are primarily full-time practicing

educators. Fifty-seven universities offer weekend classes, while 41 offer day classes. Although defined in a myriad of ways, 89% of institutions in this study have a residency requirement for the doctorate. A majority (67%) of these programs require that the student be enrolled for a minimum number of credits for two consecutive semesters, be enrolled full-time for one year, or be required to complete a minimum number of hours during a one-year period. A scattering of respondents noted 18-month, two-year, three-year, four-year, and summer residency options without the requirements for consecutive enrollment.

Doctoral programs in educational administration/leadership vary substantially in course/credit requirements. As shown in Table 3, there was wide variation in the minimum number of semester hours, exclusive of dissertation research, required beyond the master's degree; the range was 28-67 hours, with a mean of 48 semester hours and mode of 60 semester hours. Although minimum dissertation research hours varied from 0 to 30, there tended to be more consistency among universities, with the mean and mode both 12 semester hours.

While most programs (101) appear to mandate one or more cognate areas for the doctoral degree, there was little uniformity among cognate requirements. Some programs required that coursework be taken within the college of education; others mandated that the cognate be outside the college. Respondents at seven institutions indicated that there were no support field requirements for their programs. Of those requiring a cognate, minimum hours ranged from 6 to 28 with a mean of 12.3 hours; 81% of the programs with credit-hour requirements fell within the 9-18 hour range.

Of special interest are emerging practices found in the literature on suggested reforms in the preparation of educational leaders that are making their way into doctoral programs across the country. Respondents at nearly half (49.6%) of all institutions report that they require their doctoral students to complete an administrative intern experience. Doctoral students also have a practicing administrator assigned as a mentor at 25.8% of institutions surveyed. Within the classroom, 92% of all respondents reported that case

Table 3

Minimum Semester Hours Beyond the Masters Required for Doctoral Degrees in Educational Administration/Leadership

Coursework Hours Excluding Dissertation (N = 121)		Dissertation Hours (N = 120)	
Hours	Number of Institutions	Hours	Number of Institutions
28	1	0	1
30	5	2	1
32	1	3	1
36	7	4	1
37	1	5	2
39	2	6	13
40	5	8	5
41	1	9	14
42	12	10	10
43	2	11	1
44	4	12	34
45	13	13	2
46	1	14	1
47	2	15	6
48	9	16	5
50	8	18	9
51	6	20	6
53	1	24	5
54	10	25	1
55	2	30	2
56	3		
57	3		
58	1		
60	17		
63	2		
66	1		
67	1		
Mean Hours =	48.15	Mean Hours =	12.22

studies are used as part of regular class instruction. Practitioner administrators teach or team teach at 57% of the institutions responding to the survey. Technology also appears to be making serious headway in educational administration doctoral programs. Nearly 40%

of institutions reported that student access to a computer is required for the regular networking of students and professors.

Exit Criteria

The primary capstone experiences used to exit the doctoral program continue to be the requirements for a comprehensive examination and the doctoral dissertation. Comprehensive examinations are commonly used at most institutions in this survey, encompassing a wide range of formats. These examination formats can be concisely summarized as written exercises that include questions covering multiple areas of the doctoral coursework. Students write for a 12-hour span of time over 2-3 days, followed by a 2-3 hour oral examination. Respondents at three universities stated that they have no comprehensive examination requirement. Responses that departed from the traditional sit-down written examination were the following: a take-home examination (at three institutions), an examination encompassing the student's proposed dissertation topic (3), a case study (2), a trimester-long paper addressing a problem in the workforce (1), and a portfolio covering the student's doctoral experiences (1).

The dissertation is almost universally used as an exit requirement. Of the 126 institutions responding to this question, only three programs did not require a dissertation. Each of these three doctoral programs noted using one of the following alternatives to the dissertation: a field research project equivalent to the dissertation, an executive position paper, and an Ed.D. portfolio that includes a synthesis exercise. The survey did not query the specific research formats typically accepted (quantitative, qualitative, historical, etc.) or their frequency in terms of the numbers of dissertations produced in each research category. The data did reveal three dissertation-related practices being implemented at a number of universities. Collaborative projects involving two or more students were permitted at 35% of the programs surveyed. "Action research" within a K-12 school district was permitted in 75% of the programs, and practicing administrators may serve on a student's doctoral committee at 66% of the institutions surveyed.

Summary of Results

The information gleaned from this survey yields a composite picture of the "average" doctoral program in educational administration/leadership. The typical program admits 18 students annually and requires an admissions profile that includes the following: (a) a minimum score of 1000 on the verbal and quantitative subtests of the Graduate Record Examination, (b) an undergraduate GPA of 3.00, (c) a graduate GPA of approximately 3.25, (d) a writing sample that includes an essay with a personal statement of goals, and (e) a personal interview. Although teaching and administrative experience are not required, they are preferred.

Once accepted into the program, doctoral students can expect an orientation session and will primarily attend evening and summer classes. A cohort format is commonly used. Both university professors and practicing administrators will teach classes by using case studies as a part of the regular class activities. The student may have an opportunity to choose between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. The typical program will require 48 hours of post-masters coursework, exclusive of dissertation hours, leading to the doctorate. Students will select a 12-hour cognate area of study and should expect to complete a residency requirement of two consecutive semesters or extensive coursework over a one-year period. After completing the mandatory courses, students will sit for a 2-3 day written comprehensive examination, followed by a 2-3 hour oral examination. Upon achieving candidacy status, students will then embark upon their dissertation research, enrolling in 12 hours of dissertation credit.

Emerging Trends

The composite picture just illustrated does not differ greatly from conventional descriptions of the traditional doctoral program. However, the survey also asked the respondents to list any elements that make their programs unique or nontraditional. These responses may indicate new practices and may "plant the seed" as other faculties contemplate programmatic changes. Responses included the use of cohorts (at 9

institutions), field-based programs (6), cooperative doctoral programs between institutions (4), focusing on leadership instead of management (4), practical/applied coursework (4), delivery of courses at off-campus sites (3), weekend courses (3), individualized student programs of study (3), student diversity (3), and students serving as consultant teams to school districts (2).

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate any changes that were being considered for their programs, which could possibly indicate the "next wave" of doctoral program components. Those responses given by at least two institutions, and the number of times they were reported, are included in the following listing:

- Total restructuring underway or being considered (12),
- Course revisions/increased course requirements (11),
- Use of cohorts (11),
- Use of portfolios (11),
- Expanded use of internships/field experiences (7),
- Adding an Ed.D. degree/better distinction between Ed.D. and Ph.D. (6),
- Expanding technology requirements/telenetworking (5),
- Revising comprehensive examination format (3),
- Residency requirement revisions (3),
- Use of practicing/retired administrators as mentors (3),
- Use of doctoral seminars (2), and
- Redesigning or increasing research/statistics requirements (2).

It is of particular interest to note that 8 institutions recently implemented totally restructured programs and 12 were actively engaged in completely redesigning their programs. These numbers may indicate that restructuring efforts at other institutions may not be far behind.

Conclusion

Results of this study suggest that doctoral programs in educational administration/ leadership offered in universities across the country bear strong resemblance to each other when examining admissions criteria, orientation activities, instructional delivery patterns, and exit criteria. This is not surprising since new doctoral programs tend to be modeled after more mature programs (McLaughlin & Moore, 1990), no doubt representing the experiences of faculty who are themselves graduates of traditional institutions.

This study provides encouraging evidence that a number of promising practices, such as the use of portfolios, mentors, internships, field-based programs, and the expanding use of technology, are permeating the structure of doctoral programs at several institutions. It is also encouraging to note that educational leadership faculties are actively engaged in the development of programmatic changes designed to more effectively prepare administrators for the leadership challenges of the future.

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